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Message Text

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15
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 /068 W
---------- 101458
R 281500Z MAY 75
FM AMEMBASSY SANAA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5600
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANAA 1307

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, YS
SUBJECT: RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PDRY

BEGIN SUMMARY: ON MAY 27 FONMIN AL-ASNAG DISCUSSED RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN PDRY INCLUDING PROBABILILITY THAT SAUDIS MAY NOW BE IN CONTACT WITH REGIME THERE. ASNAG ALSO ADVISED THAT US SHOULD AWAIT RESULTS OF THESE SAUDI EFFORTS BEFORE MAKING ANY MOVE TOWARDS PDRY. ASNAG STATED THAT RECENT REPORTS INDICATE PDRY ARMY CARRIED OUT RECENT MANEUVERS BUT HE HAD NO DETAILS. MEANWHILE, LIBYA IS SUPPLYING PDRY ARMY WITH SMALL ARMS. AL-ASNAG DESCRIBED ECONOMIC SITUATION IN PDRY AS BAD AND SAID THAT INSTABILITY CONTINUES THERE DESPITE PERVASIVE PRESENCE OF SMKURITY FORCES. ASNAG OPINED THAT HARD-LINERS STILL REMAIN DOMINANT IN COUNTRY. AL-ASNAG'S COMMENTS ARE ALWAYS WORTHY OF ATTENTION AND STUDY, DESPITE THE FACT HE IS AN ADENI EXILE INIMICAL TO THE PDRY REGIME. END SUMMARY

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1. DURING MAY 27 DINNER, FONMIN ABDULLAH AL-ASNAG DISCUSSED

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RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE PEOPLES DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF YEMEN (PDRY). SPECIFICALLY, HE OPINED THAT IT APPEARS SAUDI ARABIA MAY HAVE ACTUALLY INITIATED CONTACTS WITH PDRY WHICH HAVE BEEN RUMORED FOR SOME TIME. AL-ASNAG BASED THIS OPINION ON THE FACT THAT THE SAUDI-SPONSORED CLANDESTINE RADIO (VOICE OF FREE SOUTH) LOCATED IN NAJRAN SAUDI ARABIA HAD STOPPED BROADCASTING FOR SEVERAL DAYS. WHEN IT RESUMED TWO DAYS GAO, IT STOPPED ATTACKING THE REGIME IN PDRY. AT THE SAME TIME, ADEN RADIO HAS CEASED ATTACKING THE SAUDI GOVERNMENT. MEANWHILE THE NEWSPAPER, THE CALL OF THE SOUTH, PUBLISHED OSTENSIBLY BY ADENI EMIGRES IN JIDDA HAS CHANGED ITS TITLE TO SIMPLY "THE CALL", EXPLAINING THAT IT WILL "NOW DEVOTE ITS EFFORTS TO FIGHTING COMMUNISM EVERYWHERE AND NOT SIMPLY IN ADEN". AL-ASNAG SAID THAT THESE SIGNS POINT TO THE BEGINNING OF SOME NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN SAUDI/PDRY RELATIONS. HE WAS NOT SURE THAT THEY WOULD LEAD ANYWHERE GIVEN THE CONTINUED IDEOLOGICAL RIGIDITY OF THE SOUTH, BUT HE ACKNOWLEDGED THE UTILITY OF THE SAUDIS' MAKING AN EFFORT.

2. IN DISCUSSING SAUDI OVERTURES TO PDRY, AL-ASNAG ALSO COMMENTED ON POSSIBLE US POLICY TOWARDS THAT REGIME. ASNAG SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW US WILL GAIN NOTHING BY TRYING TO APPROACH PDRY AT THIS TIME, BECAUSE THIS WILL ONLY ENCOURAGE PDRY TO BELIEVE TIME IS WORKING IN ITS FAVOR. AL-ASNAG THOUGHT THE BEST WAY IS TO LET MODERATE ARABS LIKE SAUDIS PROBE THE INTENTIONS OF PDRY AND IN LIGHT OF THESE EFFORTS US CAN DECIDE WHAT IT SHOULD DO. MEANWHILE, IF PDRY MAKES OVERTURES, US SHOULD RESPOND. AL-ASNAG STRESSED, HOWEVER, US SHOULD NOT "COURT" PDRY.

3. AL-ASNAG ALSO INFORMED ME THAT BASED ON RELIABLE REPORTS PDRY ARMED FORCES RECENTLY CARRIED OUT THREE-DAY MANEUVERS IN THE AREA BEHIND "LITTLE ADEN". AL-ASNAG HAD NO DETAILS ON THE EXERCISE BUT ADDED THAT PDRY ARMY HAS RECENTLY BEEN RECEIVING LARGE AMOUNTS OF SMALL ARMS FROM LIBYA. THESE ARMS ARE BEING SHIPPED ON A MALTESE CHARTER AIRCRAFT AND SO FAR SIX PLANELOADS HAVE BEEN DELIVERED TO ADEN IN BOXES MARKED WITH THE RED CRESCENT SYMBOL. ANOTHER FOUR FLIGHTS
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ARE REPORTEDLY PLANNED. AL-ASNAG SAID THAT PDRY ARMY NOW HAS MIXTURE OF 20 MIG 17S AND 21S. SOVIETS HAVE ALSO PROVIDED PDRY WITH HELICOPTERS, NUMBERS NOT KNOWN.

4. AL-ASNAG SAID THAT A WEEK OR SO AGO THE BROTHER OF THE PRIMIN WAS SHOT BY A DISGRUNTLED WORKER FOLLOWING A DISPUTE. THE KILLER WAS FINALLY TRACKED DOWN AND SHOT. AL-ASNAG SAID THAT REPORTS LIKE THESE POINT TO CONTINUING

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INSTABILITY IN PDRY DESPITE THE PERVASIVE PRESENCE OF THE
SECURITY FORCES. AL-ASNAG ALSO COMMENTED THAT ECONOMIC SITUATION
IN PDRY REMAINS "VERY BAD", ALTHOUGH THE REGIME HAS BEEN TRYING
TO BUILD UP THE PEOPLE'S HOPES BY FOCUSING ON THE IMMINENT
OPENING OF THE SUEZ CANAL.

5. FINALLY, AL-ASNAG SAID THAT IN HIS OPINION HARD-
LINERS STILL ARE DOMINANT IN ADEN, DESPITE SOME OF SEEMING
FLEXIBILITY WHICH HE ATTRIBUTED MORE TO TACTICAL MOVES
THAN TO A BASIC CHANGE IN THE LONG-TERM GOALS OF
THE PDRY REGIME WHICH INTER ALIA AIM AT THE SUBVERSION
OF YEMEN AT SUCH TIME AS THIS BECOMES POSSIBLE.

6. COMMENT: AS AN ADENI EXILE, AL-ASNAG HAS A SKEPTICAL AND
INIMICAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE PDRY REGIME. AT THE SAME TIME HE
STILL POSSESSES SOME GOOD CONDUITS TO ADEN AND HIS COMMENTS
AND INFORMATION ARE ALWAYS WORTHY OF ATTENTION AND STUDY.
SCOTES

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